



The Cornerpost

Journal of the Vermont Society of Land Surveyors
Volume 56, Number 3 | Fall 2025

REVISITING AN UNUSUAL TOWN BOUNDARY

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UNSUNG HEROES: THE LOUISIANA MISSISSIPPI LINE

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The Cornerpost

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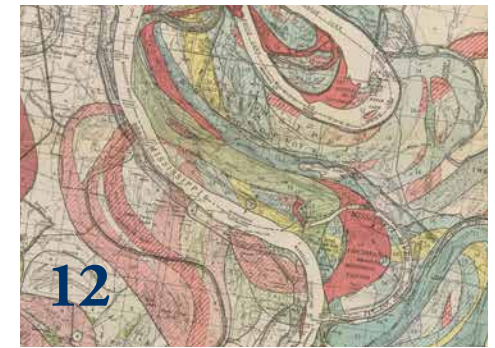
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SEND IN YOUR NEWS

The success of *The Cornerpost* depends on contributions from all of our members. Please consider submitting something for an upcoming issue. Send your articles, news and photographs to birgit@vsls.org. All ideas are welcome!



ON THE COVER

Harris Abbott, LS, stands at the boundary line joining Essex, Westford, Jericho and Underhill. He and a few friends traveled to the spot to revisit a tricky monument recovery from 2015. See page 8 for the story.

Send your photo for the cover. If you've snapped a photo in your travels that you think would look good for the cover of *The Cornerpost*, please send it to birgit@vsls.org. We're always happy to feature scenes from different parts of the state.



Above, Randy Otis on his first day as president of VSLs — the 2021 December Round Tables. From left are VSLs Treasurer Keith Van Iderstine; President Randy Otis; Vermont Board of Land Surveyors Chair Joe Flynn; VSLs Secretary Lisa Ginett, and VSLs Past President Mark Day.



“While it’s easy these days to push a button on a scanner or hit play on a virtual training, we need that person-to-person networking and volunteering to continue to be a strong and vibrant society.”

MY TERM AS PRESIDENT of VSLs is winding down, and this will likely be my last letter to you. With that in mind, I’ve been reflecting on the changes that I have seen in our industry, our society, and our profession.

Thanks to COVID, remote work has become almost commonplace, and the effects on VSLs as well as society in general are still being explored. Technology is always changing things, and the Vermont Society of Land Surveyors has weathered these changes in the past and will continue to weather future changes. The society represents the profession in Vermont, serves as a social network for the professionals, and a resource to pass on knowledge from past to current and future surveyors. I believe my replacement on the board will continue to shepherd us into the future, strengthening our reasons to continue to operate long after I retire.

As the society has changed, so has my career, and I honestly don’t get out in the field as much as I would like or as much as I used to. This week I am taking a German-built 3D laser scanner, and supplementing additional scans on an interesting bridge in Massachusetts. This particular bridge has two spans – one over a river, one over a rail yard – and a garage built into the bridge. Aside from scanning, I need to take a ladder and physically measure the I beams under the bridge to check the scanner’s measurements. Though the scanner may be high tech, it is like any other tool where

you need checks on your controls in order to understand the accuracy that the machine is producing for your final deliverable. This may not be traditional boundary surveying, nor does it require my licenses, but it is an example of how we must keep up with technology in order to protect the public, as well as our profession.

When I first signed up as a member of VSLs, I still wrote down angles and distances with a #3 pencil in a field book. The society’s winter seminar was a round table affair at the Capitol Plaza in Montpelier and we were giving out a trophy to the person that could most accurately pace a line. Today our winter seminar will be held virtually on Friday, December 12, which I do believe is a good thing for members who have a hard time getting away, or just to improve the safety of the membership on the winter roads. The downside, of course, is that we can’t have a pacing contest or a metal trophy to take home.

This to me highlights the need for volunteers, for people to get involved to make things happen and keep things exciting. The society does not run itself, and while it’s easy these days to push a button on a scanner or hit play on a virtual training, we need that person-to-person networking and volunteering to continue to be a strong and vibrant society.

May the society continue to be a resource for surveyors long after I am gone. 🌲

Randy Otis, LS



THANK YOU!

AS WE CELEBRATE OUR 35TH YEAR AT KEYSTONE PRECISION SOLUTIONS, WE EXTEND OUR HEARTFELT **THANKS TO YOU, OUR VALUED CUSTOMERS**. OVER THE YEARS, YOUR TRUST AND SUPPORT HAVE ENABLED US TO PROVIDE LEADING-EDGE GEOSPATIAL SOLUTIONS, SERVICE AND SUPPORT TO YOUR JOBSITES WHEN YOU NEED ACCURACY THE MOST. WE ARE PROUD TO HAVE BEEN YOUR CHOICE FOR THE INDUSTRY'S MOST INNOVATIVE PRODUCTS FROM CUTTING EDGE GEOSPATIAL MANUFACTURERS INCLUDING: TRIMBLE, EXYN TECHNOLOGIES, DJI, AND WINGTRA DRONES, AMONG OTHERS. YOUR PARTNERSHIP HAS BEEN INTEGRAL TO OUR SUCCESS, AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUING TO SERVE YOUR NEEDS WITH EXCELLENCE AND EXPERTISE. HERE'S TO MANY MORE YEARS OF ACHIEVING GREAT HEIGHTS TOGETHER!

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A Look at Recent Activities with NSPS

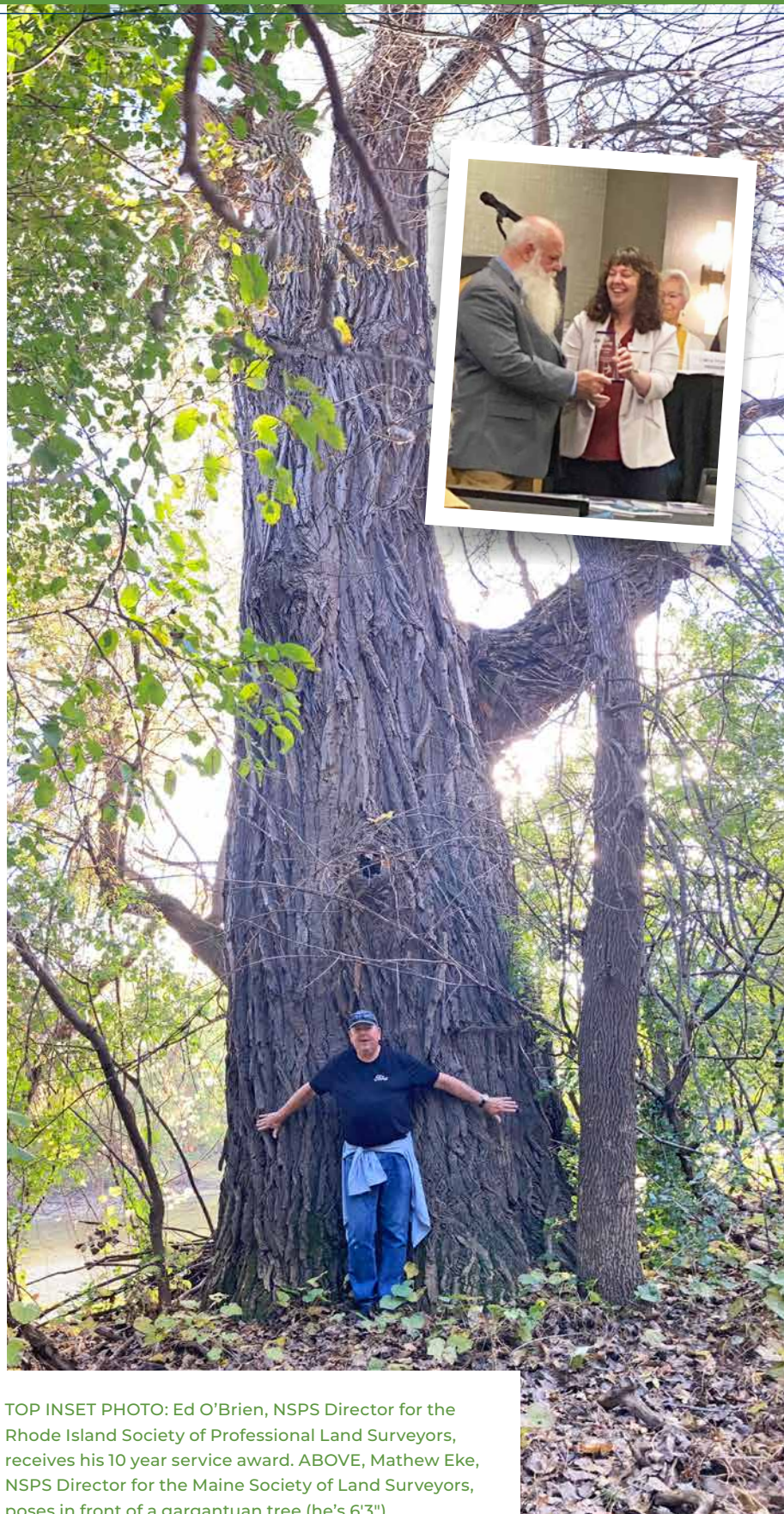
THIS YEAR, the Fall NSPS Business meeting was held in Minneapolis, home of the Mall of America among other things. The meeting format was different from previous meetings in that there were no committee meetings, just a general meeting and then the board of directors meeting. The reason is that committees are meeting monthly via Zoom, and the board of directors are attending town hall meetings monthly, so a lot more work is being done and discussed between the two business meetings.

As you have probably noticed, NSPS and the Young Surveyors Network have a much larger presence on social media than we have had in the past. If you haven't already, please check it out, and submit photos of the more unusual monuments you've found.

This fall I was honored to be nominated and accepted as a Fellows Member of NSPS, which was a total surprise. A member may be considered for membership in the Fellow category only by invitation from the Admissions Committee, with a nomination by a NSPS Fellow Member in good standing and endorsement by at least two NSPS Fellow members. Fellow candidates should be individuals who have been a member for at least ten consecutive years and have achieved distinction in one or more of the following areas: perennial and progressively more responsible service to NSPS; significant contributions to an associated profession; and/or notable professional qualifications in a position of responsible charge or occupying a senior position for a least ten years. Individuals may apply on their own volition to the Admissions Committee for consideration.

Our Lobbyist JB Byrd has been busy keeping the surveying profession in the minds of politicians as they write bills and vote on existing legislation. For a complete list of the bills NSPS is following, please visit the NSPS website.

Looking ahead, our 2026 Spring Meeting will be held in Washington, D.C. from April 13 – 17. The Student Competition is being held at the same time, and already 14 teams have signed up. We will once again have Day on the Hill to speak with legislators, plus the Board of Directors Meeting and the swearing in of new officers. **DON'T FORGET TO VOTE!!** Candidates will be featured on the NSPS podcast, and their biographies will be in News and Views. Rich Vinozzi, a professor at UMaine and long time NSPS member, is running for Vice President. 🌲



TOP INSET PHOTO: Ed O'Brien, NSPS Director for the Rhode Island Society of Professional Land Surveyors, receives his 10 year service award. ABOVE, Mathew Eke, NSPS Director for the Maine Society of Land Surveyors, poses in front of a gargantuan tree (he's 6'3").

Time Flies!

Three surveyors take a trip back to the common boundary marker for the towns of Essex, Jericho, Westford and Underhill.



Read the original article about the recovery of the monument in the Fall 2015 Cornerpost.



It's amazing how time seems to speed up exponentially with each passing year, and after 50 that power ratio goes to warp speed! Recently, Jessica Alexander, Jericho's town clerk, asked if I would be interested in being part of the picture for the Vermont League of Cities and Towns newsletter, which focused on the common boundary for Essex, Jericho, Westford and Underhill. Seeing as how Jericho is my home turf, how could I say no?

One of the more endearing aspects of this was that it was almost 10 years after *The Cornerpost* did a story on the recovery of the same monument and the survey of the Underhill/Jericho Town line from 1931.

Since Harris Abbott, LS, was there in 2015, we thought it was imperative that he be there again. So Jessica set the date, I showed up with GPS in hand, and Harris came with his calculations, his memory, and a pumpkin to mark the spot.

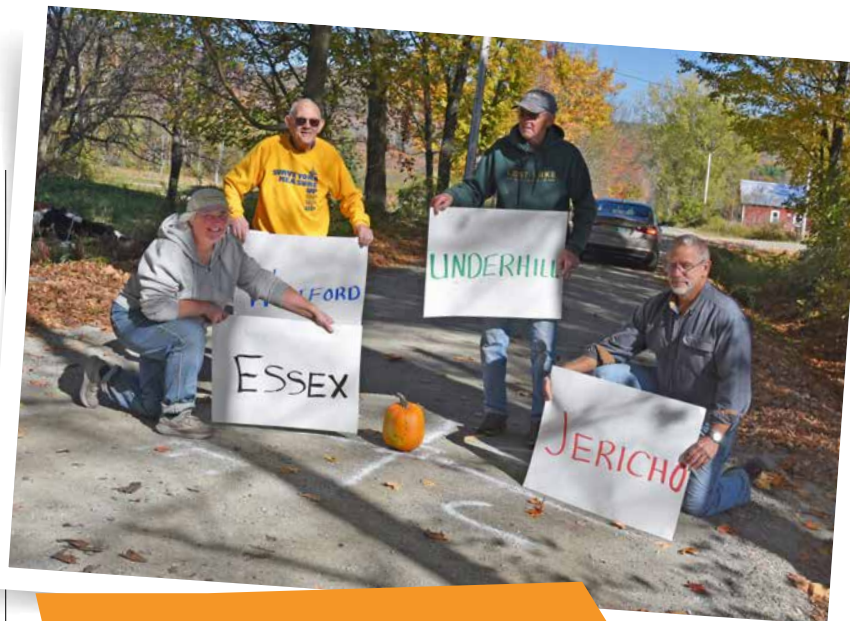
It was a beautiful fall day with Vermont colors in full display and the remnants of a warm sun still hanging on. Larry Young, LS, also joined the party since Jericho is also his turf, albeit from a different era than mine, but still his stomping grounds and his hometown.

After taking many pictures, with the majority from a wonderful young couple who happened to be just driving over Cilley Hill that morning (don't you just love living in a rural area?), we parted ways and went on to other things to complement such a beautiful fall day in Vermont.

Since Harris Abbott, LS, was there in 2015, we thought it was imperative that he be there again. So Jessica set the date, I showed up with GPS in hand, and Harris came with his calculations, his memory, and a pumpkin to mark the spot.

After mentioning this to Birgit and Kelly, they asked if I would write something up for *The Cornerpost*. I thought, what the heck, why not?! Only after getting reeled in on this did it occur that this was 10 years after the 2015 story, and how in the heck did ten years roll by?! Where did it go?

Ten years ago I wasn't a grandfather, a GPS base/rover wasn't on my horizon, Harris was only 74 (sorry Harris), and my knees and back weren't yelling at me. One decade of life just cruised on by, lost in the everyday chaos of trying to make a living, keeping my lovely wife happy with



SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR: Standing in four different towns are Jessica Alexander in Essex, Harris Abbott in Westford, Larry Young in Underhill, and Joe Flynn in Jericho.



THREE SURVEYORS AND ANOTHER PERSON: Jessica Alexander keeps company with a more prominent group of land surveyors.

my sporadic presence at home, and serving my profession and community.

Once Jessica sent the pictures to me, it piqued my whit a bit, since we were at four town corners with three surveyors and a town clerk. I hope I'm not the only one who saw this, but we have "three surveyors and another person!" Sorry, I just couldn't help myself.

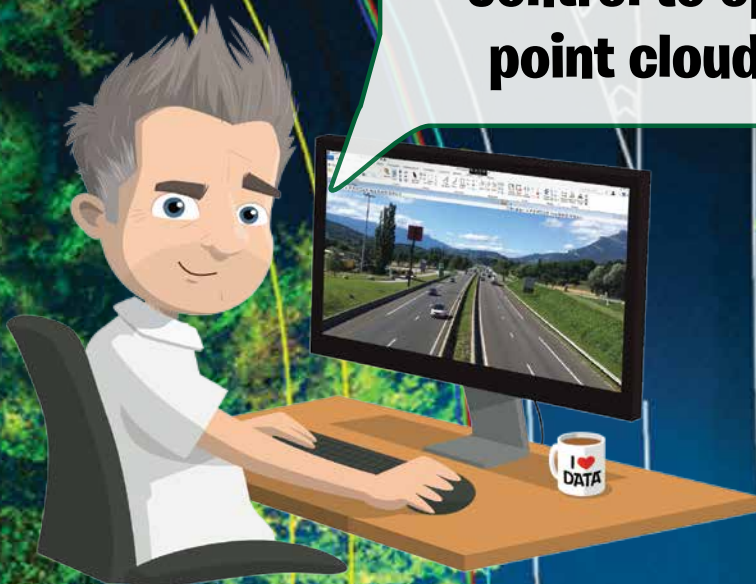
Cheers my fellow practitioners. May your clock slow down, your happy memories be crisp in your mind, and you live for another decade to reap all the great things we get to do in Vermont. 🍂



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A Few Scenes from the Fall Conference

September 19, 2025 • The Eagles, Aerie 793 • South Burlington, Vermont



↑ Scott Taylor, LS, presents the VSL Education Foundation Scholarship to Nicholas Stein, a graduate of SUNY ESF Ranger School.



↑ Mark Vander-Heyden, LS, scores a tub of Vermont goodies during one of the raffle drawings.



↑ Wetland Ecologist Tina Heath talks about the state's wetlands identification and regulations.



← Boone Meeden, LS, introduces speaker Kevin Tilton from the U.S. Forest Service, who gave a talk on condemnation and national forest boundaries.



↑ John Diebold, LS, receives a gift bag from Boone Meeden, LS, during one of the raffle drawings.

GEOLOGICAL INVESTIGATION
MISSISSIPPI RIVER ALLUVIAL VALLEY
ANCIENT COURSES
MISSISSIPPI RIVER MEANDER BELT
CAPE GIRARDEAU, MO-DONALDSONVILLE, LA.

IN 10 SHEETS SCALE IN MILES SHEET 10

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT, MISSISSIPPI RIVER COMMISSION
VICKSBURG, MISS. 1944

TO ACCOMPANY REPORT OF HAROLD N. FISK, PH.D., CONSULTANT
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY, BATON ROUGE, LA., DATED 1 DEC. 1944

R. H. S. H. N. F. FILE NO. MRC/2588 SH. 33-J

BANKLINE SYMBOLS

- Traversable prairies; final bankline positions of meanders and mapped historical banklines.
- Arbitrarily selected traversable prehistoric bankline positions marking stages of meander growth.
- Isopleths prehistoric bankline positions.

CUT-OFF SYMBOLS

- Knick cut-off following indicated stage.
- Shore cut-off following indicated stage.
- 0 (cent)
- Point


Unsung Hero

— The Louisiana-Mississippi Line —

Accretion and erosion along the banks of the Mississippi River lead to a boundary dispute between two Southern states.

BY JOSEPH FENICLE, PS, MS

Reprinted with permission, *The American Surveyor*, August 2025



Northwest of Vicksburg, Mississippi lies a landlocked portion of Louisiana that you would think rightfully belongs to Mississippi. When General Land Office (GLO) Deputy Surveyor Aaron Hitchcock was there in November of 1823, things looked a whole lot different. Hitchcock accurately located the banks and bends of the Mississippi River as well as Tullos Island. There was no question where Louisiana started and where Mississippi ended. Everything slowly changed over the next 89 years, by accretion and erosion, as Louisiana rightfully and lawfully expanded to the North and East by about five miles. This new bend, in 1912, was called Albemarle Bend and all was well between the States. That was until a violent act of avulsion created the Newman Cut-Off creating a ten-mile oxbow that would eventually, partially, silt in and appear to be that of the State of Mississippi. The Supreme Court got involved and brought in Samuel Stinson Gannett to mark where the river used to be — transferring a paper document to an on the ground survey.

Deputy Surveyor Hitchcock surveyed Township 9 North, Range 8 West of the Choctaw Meridian and Baseline. The South line of this Congressional Township would become the division line

between Political Warren and Issaquena Counties, Mississippi. The other side of the river was surveyed in March of 1824 by Ephraim Ludlow. This was Congressional Township 19 North, Range 14 East of the Louisiana Meridian and Baseline. This became Political East Carroll Parish, Louisiana. The natural changes in the Mississippi River can be clearly traced in the scientific studies and artwork of Harold Fisk.

Dr. Fisk was a geologist and cartographer with the United States Army Corps of Engineers and the author of *Geological Investigation of the Alluvial Valley of the Lower Mississippi River*. There were fifteen maps, included in the pocket of the report that showed the current and historic twists and turns of the southerly portion, of the fourth largest watershed in the world. It is Plate 22, Sheet 10/15, File Number MRC/2588 Sh. 33-J, which shows the area in discussion. You can see, in vibrant color and detail, the remarkable way the Mississippi River has changed since it was first surveyed in 1765 by Lieutenant John Ross, surveyor of the 34th Regiment of the British Army.

The Ross map has been quoted as “The most influential map of the Mississippi River on the eve of the American Revolutionary War.” Other historic meander lines, traced from old maps, are from 1820, 1880 and 1944. After that Dr. Fisk utilized aerial



1823

First survey of Louisiana-Mississippi boundary, completed by GLO Deputy Surveyor Aaron Hitchcock



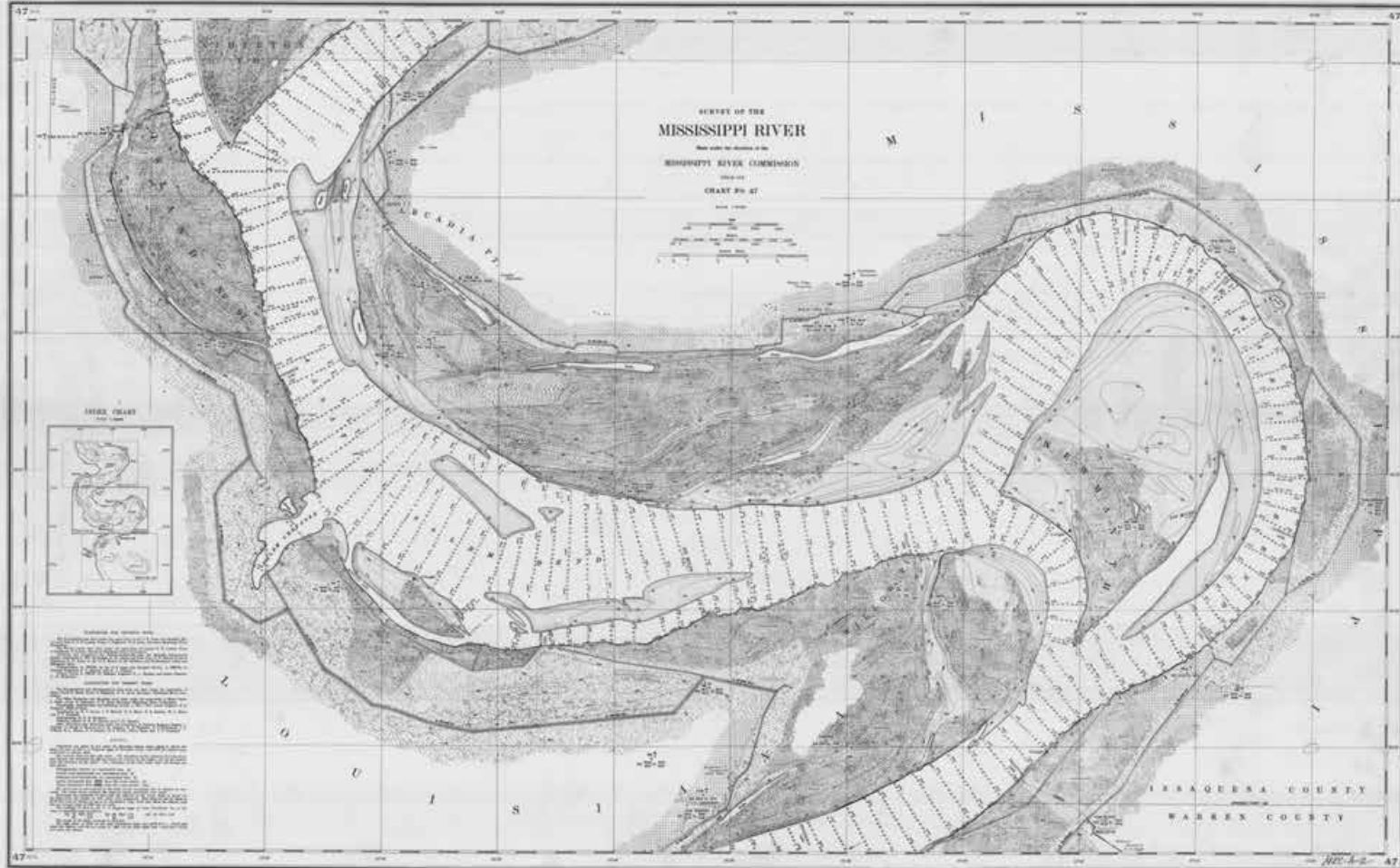
89 years

Amount of time it took for accretion and erosion to alter the boundary and create a landlocked portion of Louisiana within Mississippi



1931

Supreme Court rules that the land in question remains part of Louisiana



photographs to plot the meanders. When Samuel Stinson Gannett did his survey, he utilized the Fisk Maps but heavily relied upon the most detailed survey of the Mississippi River at the time, the Survey of the Mississippi River, Made under the direction of the Mississippi River Commission, 1913-1915, Chart No. 47. It was with this map that Gannett could retrace what the river's thalweg looked like in 1912. The Supreme Court record states "The most reliable and accurate record of location of the thread of the main channel of the Mississippi River for the dates in the area specified in section 3 of the decree is that given on chart No. 47 of the Mississippi River Commission Survey of 1913-1915."

The State of Louisiana became the 18th State on April 30, 1812. According to the Louisiana Constitution of 1812, the portion of the boundary in discussion runs "...thence along the said parallel

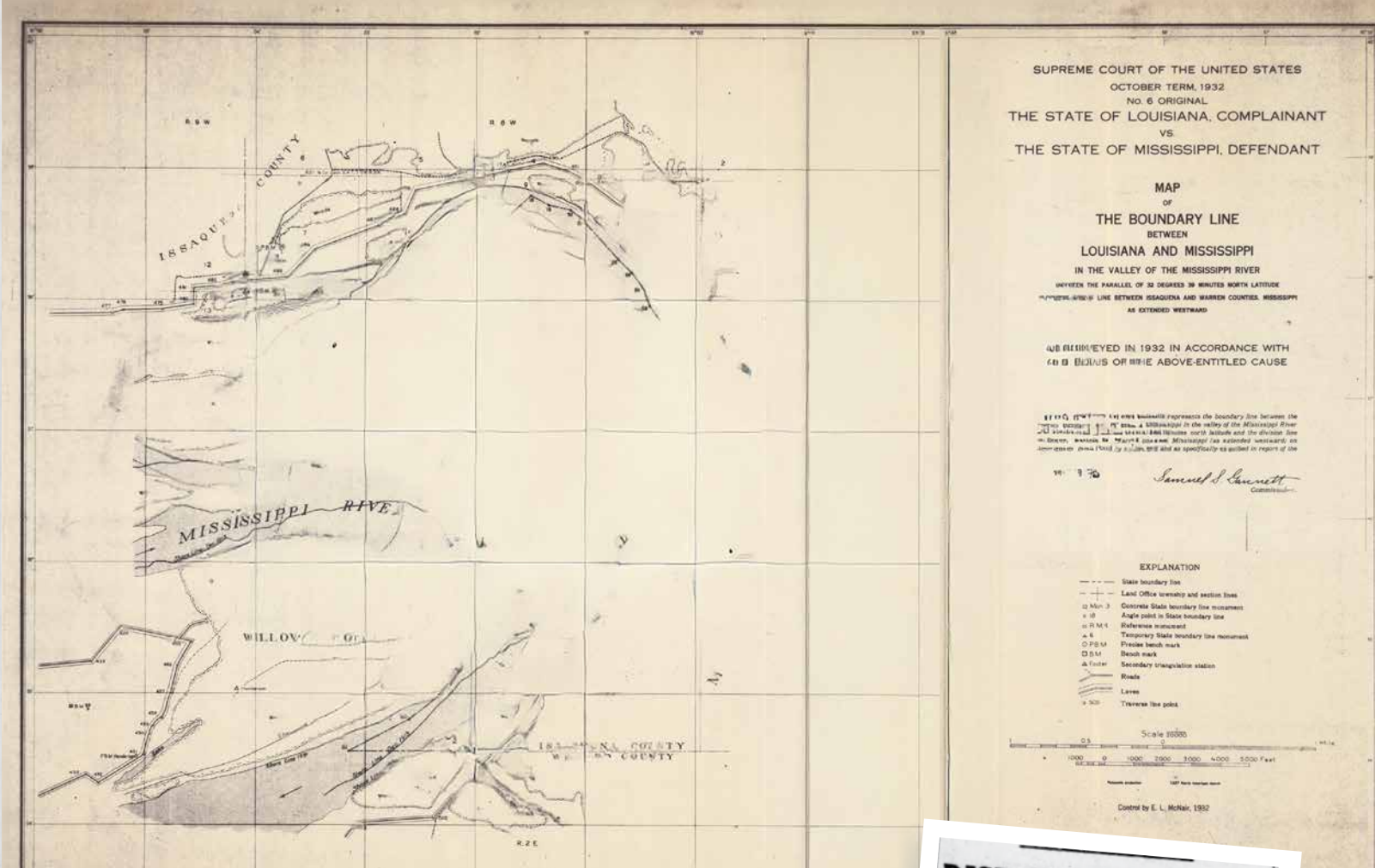
of latitude to the river Mississippi – thence down the said river to the river Iberville..." The State of Mississippi became the 20th State on December 10, 1817. According to the Mississippi Constitution of 1817, the portion of the boundary in discussion runs "...thence West along the said degree of latitude to the Mississippi River, thence up the same to the beginning..." Both States agreed on the common line, that is until it moved in 1912, and navigation fully stopped by 1916. The Supreme Court decree from 1931, in Section 3, stated that the river was in the same place at the Westerly extension of the Political County boundary between Warren and Issaquena Counties, Mississippi.

This is where Surveyor Gannett was to start his survey. According to Gannett's final report, he did an incredible job retracing the County line. He found a wooden stake at the Southeast corner of Section 33, Township 9 North, Range 8 West.

Survey of the Mississippi River, Made under the direction of the Mississippi River Commission, 1913-1915, Chart No. 47.

From this corner he ran his line West through two found line trees, a 24-inch plus Hackberry Tree and a 15-inch Oak Tree. He replaced the stake with a six-foot-long section of iron angle bar, driven 3 foot deep, as acquired from Vicksburg Boiler and Iron Works. Gannett went on to perpetuate the Section line by placing four concrete reference monuments where the road and levee crosses.

These reference monuments varied in size, shape, and material, but most had a square concrete base with a conical frustum and bronze disks like the 1927 Oklahoma and Texas State Line Boundary. The bronze disks were ordered from the Schoellhorn-Albrecht Machine Company in St. Louis, Missouri for \$2.75 apiece, the mixing materials for the concrete

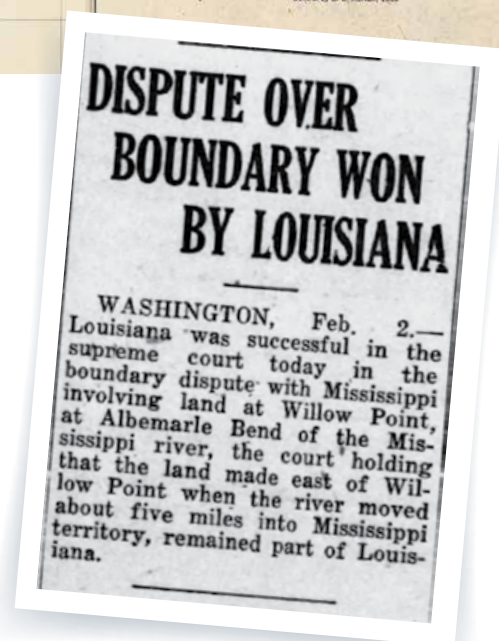


came from the Mississippi Lumber Company and the metal forms for the frustum came from Enterprise Plumbing and Metal Works.

Today this road is Mississippi Highway 465, and the location of the East-West section line is a couple of miles Northeast of the old Brunswick Store. The area is labeled as Bellevule (sometimes referred to as Bellevue) on the Warren County, Mississippi General Highway Map. For the other end of the silted in section of the old riverbed, things started easy. Gannett, and crew, started about 540 feet from the new bank of the Mississippi River at Monument Zero. This was a custom-built concrete monument with a 20-inch square base, 18 inches tall. A conical frustum, 36 inches tall, was placed on top with a bronze disk. Each concrete monument was not only referenced to local control triangulation stations but also referenced by scribing triangles on nearby bearing trees as

well as documented by latitude and longitude in the final report.

Intermediate monuments, identified as Temporary Boundary Line Monuments, were "Marked by a creosoted wooden post 39 inches long and 6 inches square, set 32 inches in ground and a small nail in top marking angle point." After the 16th monument the old riverbed was evident and filled with water. After Post 16, the physical monuments with coordinates became only coordinates and lasted until number 51. Each calculated position was identified by true bearing and distance to the next station. The total measured distance from Monument Zero to Calculated Position 51 was reported by Gannett as 52,096 feet or just under 10 miles. If that wasn't enough though, an independent reference line was also run on top of the levee with true bearings and distances also tied to triangulation stations. There were 36 (477-513) of



Top: Map of the Boundary Line Between Louisiana and Mississippi In the Valley of the Mississippi River.
Bottom: Newspaper clipping from the Winona Times, February 06, 1931, "Dispute Over Boundary Won By Louisiana."

Mark Twain always had a way of saying things the right way. He said that the Mississippi River “...is not a commonplace river, but on the contrary is in all ways remarkable.” I think, by the time this survey was over, Gannett would have agreed.

Stats from the 1932 Survey

\$2,600

paid to Gannett as
Commissioner of the survey
(\$62,000 in today's dollars)

\$15 a day

paid to Eugene McNair for
fieldwork and calculations

\$3 a day

paid to a chainman or
rodman on the survey

\$2 a day

paid to a laborer clearing line
and building monuments

these stations that were marked by six-inch square wood posts.

The fieldwork was started in October of 1932 and completed by the end of November the same year. Although Gannett was appointed Commissioner of the survey, the fieldwork and calculations were performed by his close friend Eugene Long McNair. McNair worked on many of Gannett's prior surveys, to include New Mexico-Texas, and most notably Oklahoma-Texas. McNair was paid \$15 a day for his work as compared to \$3 a day for a chainman/rodman and a mere \$2 a day for a laborer clearing line and building the concrete monuments. All angles were turned at least four times using a transit with a 6.5-inch circle. The distances were measured with a 300-foot steel chain under 20 pounds of tension.

All the geometry was tied to a true meridian by Polaris observations as well as ties to Mississippi River Commission triangulation stations, specifically the starting station B.M. Noah. The entire survey cost \$2,819.62 not counting the office, calculation and report work of Gannett that technically didn't wrap up until June 08, 1933. The report on the fieldwork was filed on May 17, 1933, and the report on all the expenses was filed on June 19, 1933. The final report on October 16, 1933, authorized the payment of \$2,600 to Gannett and approved and adopted his prior report and survey. The total cost was \$5,419.62 and was to be split equally by both States equaling \$2,709.81. The value that Gannett received from 1933 would have been equal to over \$62,000 in 2025. This completed yet another disputed State line that escalated to the United States Supreme Court.

Mark Twain always had a way of saying things the right way. He said that the Mississippi River “...is not a commonplace river, but on the contrary is in all ways remarkable.” I think, by the time this survey was over, Gannett would have agreed.

Next time we will visit the New Hampshire-Vermont State Line. It will be the last for both Gannett and McNair. 🌐

Joseph D. Fenicle, MS, PS is the Program Director and Professor at the University of Akron for its award-winning Surveying/Mapping program. Immediately prior, he was the Chief Surveyor at the Office of the Fulton County Engineer in Wauseon, Ohio for 15 years. He also owns Angular By Nature, LLC, a company specializing in Continuing Education for Surveyors and Engineers across the Nation. Joseph has a MS from the University of Maine, a BS in Surveying/Mapping from the University of Akron and an AAS in GIS/GPS from Hocking College. He is currently working on his Doctorate at the University of Maine as well as his CFedS—Certified Federal Surveyor Certification.

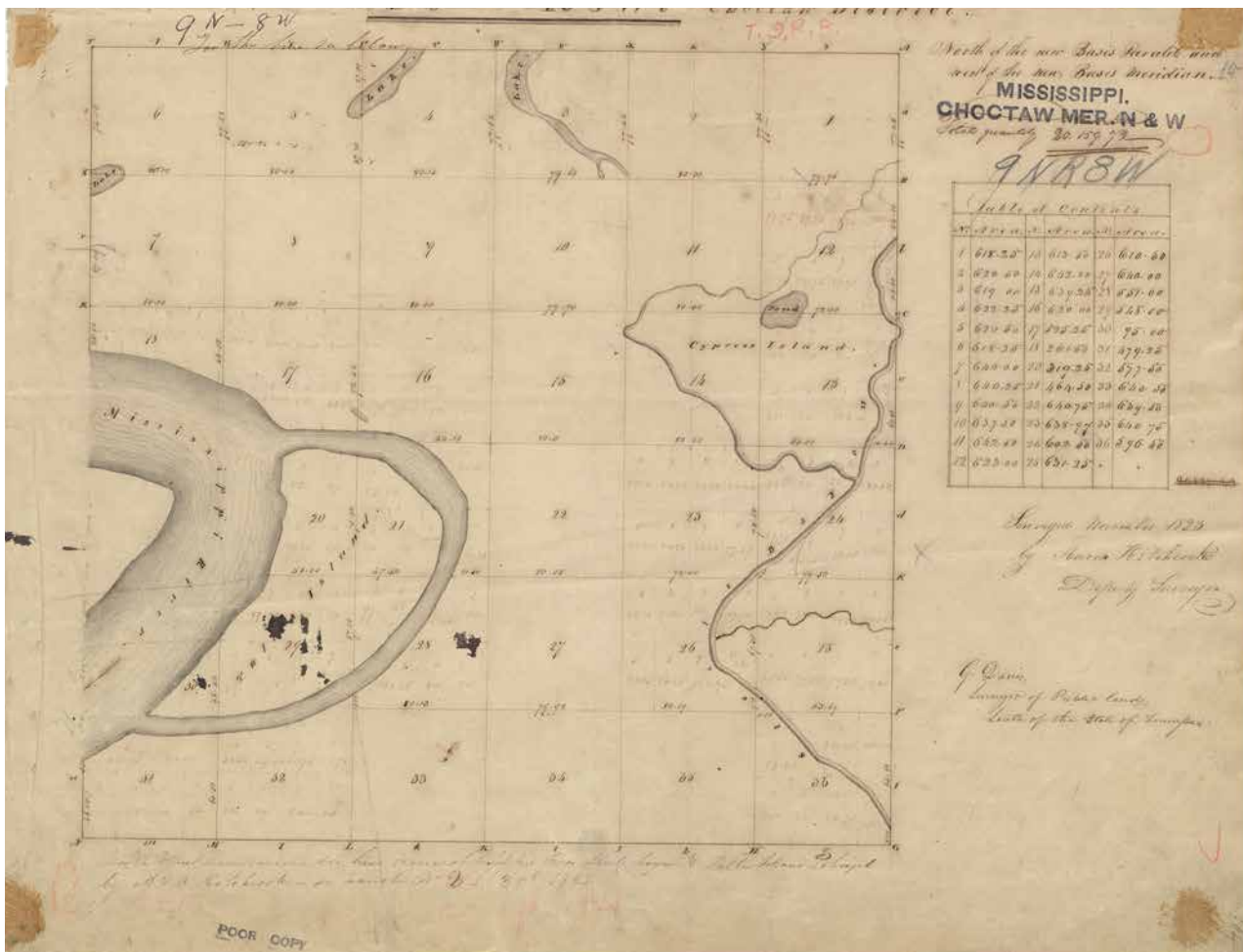
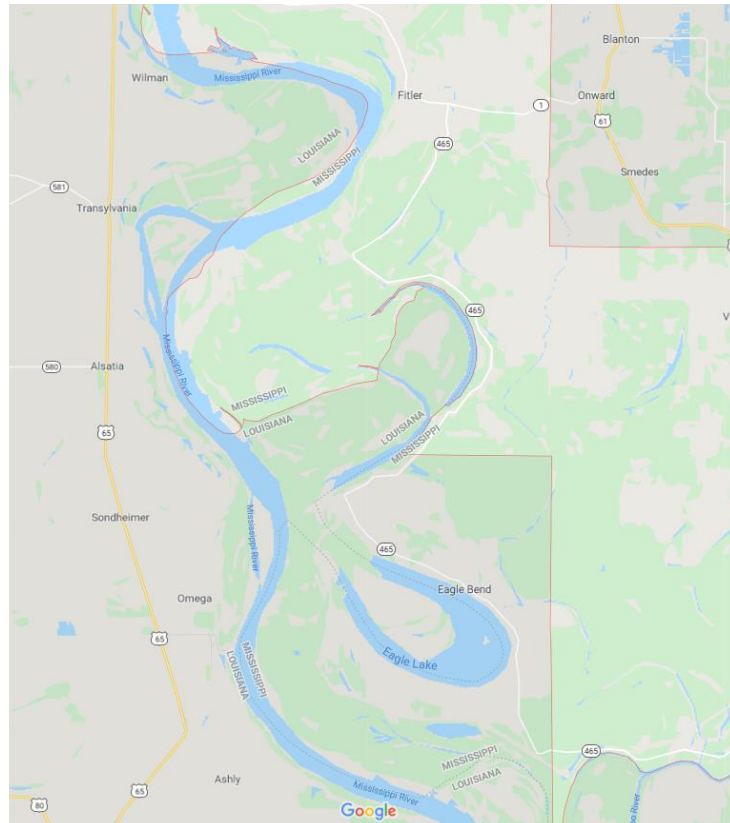
**To see the full footnoted
article, scan the QR code.**





Top: Google map showing Albemarle Bend and the Newman Cut-Off.

Bottom: General Land Office Survey of Township 09 North, Range 08 West, Choctaw Meridian and Baseline showing Tullos Island.





Considering a Graduate Education in Surveying

Is a master's degree in land surveying worth it?

This is the thirteenth article I have prepared in the series offering thoughts on professional practice and education. In this article I am going to give my thoughts on obtaining graduate education. I will define graduate education as any education earned beyond the undergraduate bachelor degree.

I will start with the premise that graduate education is not necessary for a rewarding and successful surveying career. I would even go so far to state that for many surveyors, obtaining graduate education will not gain an economical return on the investment. Finally, I will readily admit that there are numerous surveyors without a graduate education or even an undergraduate degree that are far more intelligent than many people with graduate education, including more intelligent than me. In other words, three graduate degrees does not make me more intelligent than many surveyors without a degree. If you are content with your position in

the profession, your future, and your prospects, you do not need to consider graduate education.

There are three reasons to embark on graduate education. The first is to expand the depth of your knowledge. This would be accomplished by obtaining advanced education in surveying. The second reason is to expand the scope of knowledge. Expanding the scope of knowledge would occur by obtaining advanced education in a discipline other than surveying such as business administration, law, public administration, civil engineering, or forestry, as examples. The third reason is to qualify for other employment or licenses. For example, a graduate degree is generally required for a tenured college faculty position.

As a consequence, a person with an undergraduate degree in philosophy that decides to pursue surveying, may wish to consider getting a graduate degree in surveying rather than an undergraduate degree in surveying. A person with a surveying degree may wish to obtain a graduate degree in business administration.

The first graduate degree is generally a master's degree (e.g., Master of Science, Master of Arts, Master of Business Administration). The master's degree tends to focus on a specific discipline. There are few, if

"I will readily admit that there are numerous surveyors without a graduate education or even an undergraduate degree that are far more intelligent than many people with graduate education, including more intelligent than me."

any, requirements when obtaining a master's degree for earning non-discipline specific courses to provide for a "rounded" education. Thirty credits are generally required for a master's degree. Some of the credits may be awarded for research and thesis. The 30 credits may be composed entirely of surveying or surveying-related coursework.

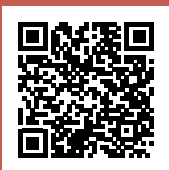
For the person interested in graduate study, there are two decisions that must be made. The first decision is to decide the focus of graduate study. The person must decide if studies will be in surveying or another field such as civil engineering, business, law, etc. The next decision is to decide the intensity of study. What I mean by intensity of study is the goal of graduate education. The easiest route for graduate education is to obtain a graduate certificate in a certain field. A graduate certificate at the University of Maine requires 12–15 credits of study, depending on the field of study. The next level of intensity is a master's degree that generally requires around 30 credits of study. Finally, a doctorate requires 42 to 90 credits of study beyond the bachelor's degree. In some cases, a person can achieve the ultimate goal of obtaining a graduate degree by taking smaller steps. For example, the credits used to obtain a graduate certificate can later be used to obtain a master's degree. The credits obtained in a master's degree can often be used toward a doctorate. There are exceptions such as a law

degree where there are no intermediate goals toward obtaining a juris doctorate (law degree).

A student who seeks to embark on graduate education should be aware that many graduate programs will not accept or only accept a limited number of credits from another university. For example, a university that requires 30 credits of graduate study to obtain a master's degree may only accept six credits from another university. The program would require 24 credits be obtained at the university awarding the graduate degree. 🌐

— BY KNUD E. HERMANSEN,
PLS, PE, PHD, ESQ.

To find more articles by
Knud Hermansen, scan
the QR code or visit
<https://mcec.umaine.edu/hermansen-articles>



NEW SURVEYORS GROUP MEETS AT GOOD MEASURE PUB & BREWERY!

By the time *The Cornerpost* is printed, the VSLS New Surveyors Group will have hosted its first meet-up at Good Measure Pub & Brewery in Northfield. The gathering took place at 6 p.m. on November 20, and attendees were invited for food and drink and an opportunity to discuss the future of this new group. The objective is to provide a casual space for newer Vermont surveyors to meet, network, share insights or mentorship opportunities, and build community.

We'll have photos from this event in the next issue of *The Cornerpost*. We plan to have more gatherings with new surveyors going forward. If you'd like to participate or you know someone who might, please email Evan Johnson at evan@mccainconsulting.com.



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Electrical and Electronics Engineering Technology

CAN YOU NAME THIS SURVEYOR?

A mystery surveyor sent in a copy of this 1973 Vermont Technical College brochure, which promoted the school's Surveying Program. The photographer took a photo of this person during an outdoor survey class. Can you tell who he is?

HINT: He is a long-time VSLS member and hails from the Central Vermont region.

You'll find the answer at the bottom of page 22.

SEND IN YOUR ODDITIES

Do you have an interesting photo from your years on the job? An old memory of other VSLS members? A new picture that struck your fancy? Well, send it in and we'll print it!
→ birgit@vsls.org



INTERESTING DISCOVERIES

Brad Perry, survey project manager at Day Land Surveying, sent in these photos of some noteworthy findings on the job. At left is an old stone lot corner in Fletcher, Vt. At center is a "corner blaze" on a power pole in Johnson. "I'm certain the power company wouldn't approve!"

SPRING BLOOM

Evan Johnson of McCain Consulting sent in this photo from Warren, Vt. He caught the springtime leaf-out while out performing some GPS surveying.



A DEFT HAND

This summer's busy field season saw the McCain Consulting field crew negotiating sites with complex features, like this new construction in Vermont's Mad River Valley with lots of timber work. Photo by Evan Johnson.

July 17, 2025 • 6:00 p.m. • Google Meet

The meeting was called to order at 6:10 P.M. In attendance were Randy Otis, Lisa Ginett, Keith Van Iderstine, Gayle Burchard, Chris Haggerty, and our Administrator: Birgit McCall. Absent: Mark Day.

SECRETARY'S MINUTES

Minutes for the Executive Committee meeting for May 7, 2025 were reviewed. Birgit and Keith asked that I correct the amount on the 4th paragraph, under Treasurer's Report in the minutes, as the figure that VSLs normally earns for our Spring Seminar was incorrectly reported and should read \$5,000.00 – \$6,000.00. The motion to approve the minutes with that revision was made and seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of the May 7, 2025 minutes.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer's report for the period of January 1st to July 12th 2025: total income for period of the report was \$43,545.02, total expenses were \$39,830.65, net income was \$3,714.37, total cash on hand was \$17,108.50. Education Foundation Investment Balance was \$118,444.49 and VSLs General Fund Investment Balance was \$58,416.50. It was reported that membership renewals were at around 95% and we have lost one sustaining member.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Birgit reports that to date there are three speakers lined up for the Fall Seminar, which will be held at The Eagles in South Burlington on Friday, Sept. 19. The Program Committee is working on obtaining one other speaker. Birgit once again asked for articles for "The Cornerpost."

The group discussed the fact that we had lost Joe Flynn's participation in both the Executive and the Program Committees due to family concerns. It was noted that we need to fill the spot vacated by Joe. A quick look through the Bylaws indicated that the Executive Committee can vote for a temporary

replacement. Birgit will send out an email (after making certain with Joe that this is still the case) informing the membership that Joe has left his position on both this and the Program Committee and asking for any volunteers to replace him. We also need a Vice President and as Randy's term will be up in December, someone to go into the position of President for the incoming election cycle. Birgit also noted that Joe was one of the first people she would go to for information when she needed a contact to help answer questions. The group thought that we could ask for volunteers to help Birgit answer questions in the next issue of "the Cornerpost" as well as at the fall business meeting.

YOUNG SURVEYORS UPDATE

Apparently there has been no action on this issue. Keith will talk to Evan Johnson about the topic soon as Evan had agreed at our last meeting to undertake to revive interest in this group.

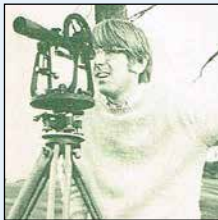
OTHER BUSINESS

There was a brief discussion on the topic of a social event for VSLs members, perhaps opened to non-member interested parties such as survey techs to help with recruitment. We talked about doing something fun, maybe reviving the pacing contest (wondering who has the pacing trophy). It is noticed that many of the younger surveyors / technicians are getting their CEUs online and not attending VSLs Seminars. Not sure how to advance this. We talked about a date on a weekend in October, maybe to be situated in Groton State Forest. Chris said he would check on the availability of an open air pavilion, and we'll try to firm up a date at the next meeting.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:49 PM

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ginett, VSLs Secretary

?

**DID YOU NAME THIS SURVEYOR?**

Turn the page upside down to see who it is.

It's Stephen Fraser, LSI Stephen retired in 2023 as co-owner of Vermont Survey and Engineering, Inc., in Montpelier.

?

?

August 14, 2025 • 6:00 p.m. • Google Meet

The meeting was called to order at 6:05 P.M. In attendance were Randy Otis, Lisa Ginett, Keith Van Iderstine, Mark Day, Gayle Burchard and our Administrator: Birgit McCall. Absent: Chris Haggerty

SECRETARY'S MINUTES

Minutes for the Executive Committee meeting for July 17, 2025 were reviewed. The motion to approve was made and seconded and the vote was unanimous to approve the minutes of the July 17, 2025 meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer's report for the period of January 1st to August 12th 2025: total income for period of the report was \$43,545.02, total expenses were \$39,830.65, net income was \$3,714.37, total cash on hand was \$17,108.50. Education Foundation Investment Balance was \$120,170.74 and VSLS General Fund Investment Balance was \$59,267.89.

ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Birgit reports that the registration for the Fall Seminar has been rolled out. She thanked Gayle for finding the Eagles for a location for the event. The Eagles can handle about 80-90 people, though there are several posts in the room. There will be several long tables for the presenters and round tables for lunch. Gayle also checked into the Elks club and thinks it might be good for a future seminar location; currently they have no cook, so it wouldn't work for this seminar.

The winter webinar, scheduled for Dec. 12, has four potential speakers and will probably award 4 CEUs. The presenter planned so far is Tommy Brooks from Alabama on Right-of-Way and Easement — finding, locating and describing them. The program must be put together by Sept. 16 so that the Board of Land Surveyors authorizes the CEUs for both the webinar and the Fall Seminar program.

Birgit notes that so far no one is stepping up to take the Vice President or director positions on our Committee. Gayle suggested that if someone else wanted to take her position as NSPS coordinator, she would take the VP position. There was a short discussion as to who might fill our empty positions. It was decided that Birgit should post the Executive Committee openings in "The Cornerpost" and also send out an email notification to the membership. The vote needs to be warned at the October meeting. Birgit says that "The Cornerpost" looks good and is going to tell Kelly to print it as reviewed.

PRESERVATION

It was reported that scans were complete on George Bedard's and David Peatman's records. There was some discussion with Carroll Peters' wife, but she wanted a fortune for Carroll's records so the subject was dropped.

YOUNG SURVEYORS

There is a blurb in "The Cornerpost" trying to get some action on this issue. Birgit will compile a list of newer surveyors and hopes that we can poll them to see what they would want to get out of a young surveyors group.

OTHER BUSINESS

Birgit discussed with the group any ideas that we had for giveaways at the Fall Seminar. The group members suggested pint glasses with the VSLS logo, T-shirts, first aid kits, and thumb drives. Birgit will consider what works best given our budget for the event. It was noted that we will have a short business meeting over lunch at the Fall Seminar.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ginett, VSLS Secretary



Come Join Us

VSLS members are welcome to attend Executive Committee meetings, which are held each month. Please contact Birgit McCall to learn when the next one is: birgit@vsls.org.

September 19, 2025 • 1:00 p.m. • Eagles Aerie, South Burlington

The VSLS General Membership Business Meeting was held after lunch at our Fall Seminar. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 P.M. Executive Officers in attendance were Randy Otis, Lisa Ginett, Gayle Burchard, Chris Haggerty and our Administrator: Birgit McCall.

EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The Education Foundation is in good shape financially and for the first time in six years there was an application for the scholarship, which was awarded in the amount of \$6,000 to Nick Stein. We were reminded that it is necessary to apply six months before or after graduation.

YOUNG SURVEYORS

Evan Johnson spoke to the group briefly about the idea for some casual meet ups for the young surveyors group, hoping for some good networking options. He asked that people get in touch with him if they are interested. We are all aware that the state needs more licensed land surveyors.

Various people spoke about ideas for some sort of education about the profession to young people. Gayle mentioned that NSPS has an entire work force group and that they have a fair amount of material. But this requires people on the ground to talk to youngsters, etc., as well as disseminate the material. Career days and reaching out to guidance counselors was suggested, but the Executive Committee has been struggling for years with who, how and where this should occur. No volunteers come forward to undertake this outreach.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Randy reports that membership is down by 10% and that VSLS really needs people to step up and get involved and do some work. He noted that although one can get CEUs online, the best reason for in-person seminars is networking. Randy said that he was at the end of his term as President and that we need someone to step in as Vice President, too. He discussed what all of the Executive

Committee members have been wondering — whether we should disband the Society. There was no direct discussion but it did not appear that anyone thought this was a worthy idea. It was discussed that if the Board of Land Surveyors would agree to give some CEUs for being a working member of the Executive Committee, it might help others to step up.

As our treasurer could not attend, Randy reported briefly that we have income of about \$55,000 and expenses of about \$53,000, and that he hoped that surveying firms might make an effort to send non-licensed staff members to our Seminars.

Chris Haggerty reported that we had been discussing having some VSLS social gatherings — maybe at a local state park — events that would be family friendly.

OFFICERS

As we need to get a line-up by October in order to warn for a vote on officers at the December Webinar, the pressure was on. Chris Haggerty stated that if someone would replace him as director, he would take the Vice President position. Kevin LaRose said that he would take the director position. Hallelujah!! Gerald Stockman stepped up to run for the President spot.

There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:28 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Lisa Ginett, VSLS Secretary

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2026 Proposed Budget & Officers

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Gerald Stockman, LS
PRESIDENT



Chris Haggerty, LS
VICE PRESIDENT



Lisa Ginett, LS
SECRETARY



Keith Van Iderstine, LS
TREASURER



Gayle Burchard, LS
DIRECTOR, VSLs/NSPS



Kevin LaRose, LS
DIRECTOR



Position Available
DIRECTOR

We need you.

The Director position is a modest commitment of time but a great benefit to the society. To join us, email birgit@vsls.org.

EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Members at Large

Ethan Gilmour, LS
Robert Holt, LS
Scott Taylor, LS

VSLs Officers

Lisa Ginett, LS
Gerald Stockman, LS
Keith Van Iderstine, LS
Chris Haggerty, LS

2026 BUDGET

INCOME

Advertising Revenue	\$1,230.00
Donations *	\$700.00
Interest	\$20.00
Membership Dues	\$21,000.00
Online Payment Fees	\$1,500.00
Program Revenues	\$45,550.00

Total Income **\$70,000.00**

EXPENSES

Accountant Fees	\$575.00
Advertising Expenses	\$250.00
Association Dues	\$3,700.00
Bank and Online Payment Fees	\$1,750.00
Donation Expense	\$250.00
Insurance	\$700.00
Memorial Contributions	\$200.00
News Magazine Production	\$3,500.00
News Magazine Design	\$2,500.00
Office Supplies	\$375.00
Payroll Expenses	\$22,100.00
Postage	\$75.00
Program Expenses	\$28,000.00
Public Relations	\$1,000.00
Rent	\$1,725.00
Telephone	\$300.00
Travel	\$3,000.00

Total Expense **\$70,000.00**

PROGRAM COMMITTEE

Boone Meeden, LS, Chair
Harris Abbott, LS
Gayle Burchard, LS

Doug Henson, LS
Position available

PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

Harris Abbott, LS
Malcolm Moore, LS

Eric Morse, LS
Scott Taylor, LS



SURPRISING PROPORTIONS

Brad Perry, survey project manager at Day Land Surveying, sent in this photo of a unique plumb bob at a marble quarry in West Rutland, "probably the biggest plumb bob most of us have seen."



Send your photos to birgit@vsis.org!

2025 Winter Webinar



4 PDH
approved

Friday, December 12

8:00 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.

SCHEDULE

8:00 – Noon Rights-Of-Way and Easements:
Finding, Locating, Describing

Noon – 12:20 pm Business meeting & votes
to approve budget and
committee nominees

REGISTRATION FEES

Full Member in good standing of
VSLs or kindred society..... \$110.00
Associate Member\$88.00
Life Member\$82.50
Technical Staff.....\$93.50
Group Rate (3+ people with
at least one member).....20% discount
Student Member..... \$35.00
Non-Member \$150.00

SEMINAR DESCRIPTION

Rights-Of-Way and Easements: Finding, Locating, Describing

This course will explore the various types of encumbrances that can be placed on real property in the form of rights-of-way or easements. The course will help the surveyor recognize encumbrances both in the written record and by physical evidence on the property. The course will delve into the methods for describing rights-of-way and easements and help the surveyor determine the best method based on the type of right-of-way or easement.

PRESENTER

Thomas Brooks, Survey Manager at HGA



Mr. Brooks is a Professional Surveyor who is licensed Alabama and 18 other states, with over 35 years of professional experience. He ran his own surveying firm for two decades in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Since then, he has held responsibilities for pipeline surveys nationwide and supervised up to 45 survey crews, ensuring proper training and quality control. He is past-president of both the National Society of Professional Surveyors and the Alabama Society of Professional Land Surveyors.

To Register (Please complete and mail this form or register online at vsls.org)

Name _____

Address _____

Email (required) _____

☐ Check enclosed (payable to VSLs) for \$ _____

☐ Credit card payment: ☐ VISA ☐ MC ☐ AMEX ☐ DISC

Card Number _____

Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____

Please return form with payment to: VSLs, P.O. Box 99, East Montpelier, VT 05651. Questions? birgit@vsls.org



The Cornerpost

P.O. Box 99
East Montpelier VT
05651



Give Us Your Ideas for the Spring Round Tables

The Program Committee is planning the Spring Round Tables, and they need your input. Please use the QR code to complete a survey and give your thoughts about topics for the round table discussions.



JUST ANOTHER DAY AT THE OFFICE

Keith Van Iderstine, LS, of McCain Consulting, discusses existing property lines with a mountain biker client in Waterbury Center. Camel's Hump is visible in the background. *Photo by Evan Johnson*